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CONTRA COSTA BUSINESSES GEARING UP FOR NEW SMOKE-FREE PUBLIC PLACES LAW

Businesses in Contra Costa County are being sent materials to aid in their compliance with the smoke-free public spaces ordinance passed last fall by the County Board of Supervisors.

Contra Costa Health Services' Tobacco Prevention Project (TPP) is enlisting the help of businesses and a restaurant association in enforcing new law. The TPP is working with the County Business License Office to send materials about the ordinance to each of the more than 6,000 licensed businesses in Contra Costa. Their efforts will be described in a presentation this month to the Board of Supervisors' Family and Human Services Committee.

"Secondhand smoke is a toxic air contaminant," said Denice Dennis, TPP manager. "Businesses have a role to play in protecting residents and employees from secondhand smoke exposure by posting the required signage."

Materials sent to the businesses include a letter from Dr. Wendel Brunner, the county Director of Public Health, urging compliance with the new law. There is also a brochure, a window decal, and referrals to the Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) website.

At the website are all the materials from the packet as well as printable signs. The page will also be linked to the Business License Office (at occounty.us), which is part of the County Treasurer/Tax Collector Department.

The new law, which took effect last November 17, prohibits smoking in the unincorporated county area in all workplaces and indoor areas open to the public within 20 feet of doors, windows, vents and air ducts of enclosed places open to the public, outdoor dining areas, parks and services areas such as ATM lines and bus stops.

"As part of our education and outreach for the new law, we recently conducted interviews about it with the California Restaurant Association and several business owners," said Yvonne Beals, policy coordinator for TPP. "We are also going to be teaming with other county departments to make sute signs are posted about the law."

The TPP will be answering a toll-free complaint line set up for the law that is included on the free signs, 1-888-877-4202.

The Tobacco Prevention Project is part of Contra Costa Health Services' Public Health Division in the Community Wellness & Prevention Program. For more information visit cchealth.org online and click on Health Topics and then Tobacco, or call 925-313-6214.

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